Tariff war among telecome companies

724. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the aggressive war over tariffs among telephone companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to regulate the telephone tariff to ensure healthy competition among the private operators; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) Due to the increased competition and various policy and regulatory decisions taken by Government and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) the rates for telecom services have been falling. The decline in tariff for Mobile, National Long Distance, and International Long Distance segments has been substantial in recent years.

As per the present tariff framework, the operators have flexibility to offer different tariffs depending on the market conditions and other commercial considerations. However, these tariffs are to be consistent with the general regulatory principles of non-discrimination, non-predation, and Interconnection Usage Charges compliance. The TRAI continues to regulate tariffs in respect of those segments where the competition is inadequate or for social reasons. Thus, the tariff for basic service in rural area, roaming in cellular mobile service and tariffs for Leased Circuits (both domestic and International Private Leased Circles) are presently regulated.

National Internet Backbone Project

725. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Internet Backbone Project has been delayed by over a year;